

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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May 25, 2011  
Start: 9:45 am  
Recess: N/A

HELD AT: Committee Room  
250 Broadway - 16<sup>th</sup> Fl.

B E F O R E:  
DEBORAH L. ROSE  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Julissa Ferreras  
Margaret S. Chin  
James G. Van Bramer  
Lewis Fidler

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Committee on  
3 Civil Rights is called to order. I'd like to say  
4 good morning. Today members of the Committee on  
5 Civil Rights will vote on the proposed  
6 Introductory bill No. 363-A. This bill calls on  
7 the Commission on Human Rights to develop programs  
8 on types of bias-related harassment and repeated  
9 hostile behavior, including conduct of verbal  
10 threats, taunting, intimidation, abuse and  
11 cyberbullying. The programs are to be provided in  
12 public and private schools, public libraries,  
13 museums and other suitable places. The bill  
14 defines the term cyberbullying as "willful and  
15 repeated harm inflicted through use of computers,  
16 cellphones and other electronic devices that is  
17 intended to frighten, harass, cause harm, extort  
18 or otherwise target another person."

19 This bill is just one of many  
20 efforts that the Council is making to address  
21 cyberbullying in New York City. I am pleased that  
22 this initial effort is coming from the Committee  
23 on Civil Rights. I encourage my colleagues here  
24 today to vote in favor of this important piece of  
25 legislation. I'd like to thank my colleague

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2 Council Member Fidler for moving this legislation  
3 and sponsoring it, and Council Member Fidler would  
4 like to have some remarks.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Just  
6 briefly, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you very much  
7 for your help and support and leadership on this  
8 bill, in particular for the terrific hearing that  
9 we had so recently, and to the Speaker for  
10 recognizing the importance of this issue and  
11 putting together the summit that we're going to be  
12 having next month on cyberbullying. The only two  
13 words you really need to say about cyberbullying  
14 would be Tyler Clementi, and I think that everyone  
15 would probably understand just from that.

16 We heard plenty of evidence at the  
17 hearing that while the old expression "sticks and  
18 stones may break your bones, but words will never  
19 harm you" is not only not true, but in the  
20 Internet age even less so. So I think this is  
21 important. I wish we had the ability to direct  
22 the Department of Education to directly teach this  
23 in our schools. I think it's an - - of state law  
24 that so many of us, probably all of us, have  
25 provided computers in our schools, but we don't

1  
2 have the right under the law to tell the  
3 Department of Education that they must teach kids  
4 how to use them properly and safely. That's kind  
5 of unfortunate, but so we do the next best thing  
6 we can. I certainly—I would like to thank my  
7 counsel, Jen Wilcox, who thought of this back door  
8 in and this is her first bill, so we just have to  
9 have that shout out, also my staff counsel, Brad  
10 Reed, as well who worked on this, and thank you,  
11 Chairwoman and thank you to everybody. I urge you  
12 to support the bill.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you,  
14 Council Member Fidler. I would like to thank my  
15 counsel, Julene Beckford and Damien Butvick, for  
16 helping us to usher this bill in, and now I will  
17 open the vote.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
19 Committee Clerk, roll call vote in the Committee  
20 on Civil Rights Introduction 363-A. Council  
21 Member Rose?

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ferreras?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chin?

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer?

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of four

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in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no

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abstentions, the item is adopted. Members please

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sign the Committee report. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSE: Thank you. We

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will hold the vote open for about 15 minutes for

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members to come in and vote. Thank you. Thank

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you all for coming. Dismissed.

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[laughter]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

*Kimberley Uhlig*

Date May 31, 2011